

# CITY PAGES

## *Is Andrew Zimmern's Chinese restaurant*

AS BAD AS EVERYONE SAYS IT IS?

"The decor is a combination of a tiki bar feel and the Rainforest Cafe."

—Dianna, Minneapolis

"I'm amazed this is a real, opened restaurant that ostensibly had test openings."

—John K., Minneapolis

"We had to go to McDonald's to wash out the terrible food taste from Lucky Cricket. McDonald's, you guys!"

—Meky W.,  
Maplewood

"Complete waste of money. I wouldn't go back and I give it another year in that location. 0 stars but wouldn't let me post without one."

—Maria S.,  
Fort Leonard  
Wood, MO

"It's like this is a joke on the nice folks in the West-Mpls 'burbs who consider themselves discerning diners, but have no sophistication."

—Uncle D., Minneapolis

"Half of the stuff on menu was not available. VERY LOUD."

—Dave M., Minneapolis



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**IF YOU WEREN'T A BARTENDER, WHAT WOULD YOU BE:**  
*A homicide detective*

**MOST ANNOYING THING ONE CAN DO TO GET YOUR ATTENTION FOR A DRINK:** Shake their glass at me

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**BEST HANGOVER CURE:** Pedialyte

**NEXT BIG TREND IN COCKTAILS:**  
*Resurgence of the beer and a bump*

BARTENDER  
OF THE WEEK  
←  
*Sophie*



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**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**  
Jerard Fagerberg, Jay Gabler,  
Tony Libera, Michael Madden,  
Erica Rivera, Sheila Regan

**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
Galen Fletcher, Alma Guzman,  
Lucy Hawthorne, E. Katie Holm,  
Shelly Mosman, Tony Nelson,  
Colin Michael Simmons

**Art**  
**ART DIRECTOR** Emily Utne  
**LAYOUT EDITOR** Shelby Lano

**Production**  
**DESIGN MANAGER** Dana Holmay  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNER** Jackie Kilmer

**Publisher**  
Mary Erickson

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Emma Engeldinger  
**MARKETING INTERN** Maia Jacobson

**Business and Administration**  
**FINANCE MANAGER** Bernadette Botoshe  
**STAFF ACCOUNTANT** Du Nguyen Ho

**City Pages**  
650 3rd Avenue South, Suite 1300,  
Minneapolis, MN 55488  
**PHONE** 612.375.1015 **FAX** 612.372.3737  
**E-MAIL** [adinfo@citypages.com](mailto:adinfo@citypages.com)  
**CITY PAGES ONLINE** [www.citypages.com](http://www.citypages.com)  
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## THE SHORTLIST



Minnesota rep proposes bill to crack down on fake hate crimes  
at [citypages.com](http://citypages.com)

GLEN STUBBE, STAR TRIBUNE

## THE STAT SHEET:

**255**

Number of vehicles Minneapolis towed on a single day last week for violating snow emergency laws

**1**

Minnesota's ranking among states on hybrid and electric car taxes, if a bill by Minnesota state Sen. Jeff Howe (R-Rockville) is passed

**40**

Percentage of Americans who possess the basic civics knowledge to pass the U.S. citizenship exam

**50**

Percentage of Americans who believe married women should be legally obligated to take their husband's last name

**Maybe someone should tell him coffee is hot, Minnesota winters are icy, and don't eat the shampoo.**

Reader Kimberly Lynn responds to "News anchor Jeff Passolt is suing Minnesota over a slippery sidewalk," at [citypages.com](http://citypages.com).

## SWAMP MONSTERS

**PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP** has long promised to attack the soaring price of prescription drugs. So naturally he selected Alex Azar as his new secretary of health and human services.

Azar is uniquely qualified to oversee the nation's insurance, medical research, and drug safety programs—at least by Washington standards. During his five years as president of Eli Lilly, he tripled the price of the company's insulin, despite no apparent increase in quality or production costs.

He'll now be in charge of regulating America's drug companies. We're guessing you feel safer already.

## POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

Minnesota's **CLIMATE** **BEGINS ITS DESCENT** toward an unrecognizable future

**HEALTHPARTNERS** tried screwing Minneapolis' Isaiah Breen... until he tweeted about it

University of Minnesota narcs on its **POT-SMOKING STUDENTS**, but in the dumbest way

Catholic website wants Minneapolis church St. Joan of Arc shut down for **WELCOMING GAY PARISHIONERS**

**ICEHOUSE BAR** promises 'safe(r) space,' cuts ties with alleged sexual harasser

# FALSE WITNESS

Burnsville church changes its name to escape the Illuminati

Sometimes, all you need is a fresh start.

That's what LifePrint Church in Burnsville thought it needed after Pastor John Erbele had, as the church website puts it, "a very public moral failure" in 2010. It resulted in him pleading guilty to hiring a prostitute.

The church was only founded in 2009. So, after a "painful and prayerful process," LifePrint chose to start again under a new name—Illumination Church. The name was to remind parishioners "to live in the light and to point people to the light of the world—Jesus Christ."

But now Illumination is changing its name for a second time—not because of any mishap or scandal, but because it keeps getting messages from people who assume it's affiliated with the Illuminati, that shadowy group mythologized by conspiracy theorists as the secret controller of the world.

"They were primarily from places outside of the country," current pastor Mike Lotzer says. "They'd ask questions like, 'How do I join the Illuminati? I've been trying to get in for years.'"

It was kind of funny—at least until they were getting "three to five messages a day," Lotzer says. Church leadership was facing a choice between turning off their global setting on Facebook or having a staff member constantly monitoring missives from Illuminati hopefuls, neither of which they particularly wanted to do.

Others worried they were being associated with the New Age religious movement Eckankar, which has a temple in Chanhassen and often uses "illumination" and "illuminated" to describe the revelations of the faith—including soul travel, reincarnation, and portentous dreams. (Eckankar is also plagued with rumors, including suspicions that the group is a cult, and allegations



PEXELS

that its founder, Paul Twitchell—a former Scientologist from the L. Ron Hubbard days—plagiarized religious texts.)

"We don't want our name to give a false impression to non-believers as we endeavor to share Christ with them," the church's website says, nor do they want to discourage "Christian transplants" looking for a "solid Bible-based church." So in January, church leaders unanimously voted "Illumination" out.

The new name they settled on is Mercy Road Church, chosen to evoke a "journey

of faith." The rebranding will cost Mercy Road about \$17,000. Luckily, the nearby Hosanna Lutheran has written a \$15,000 check to help out.

For an older, bigger, more established church like Hosanna, Lotzer says, two name changes in 10 years might have been an untenable proposition. But Lotzer sees the new name as an opportunity to find ways to impart "mercy" on its congregation—and more outreach to those who are hurting.

"A good name should hold you accountable," he says. —HANNAH JONES

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LUCY HAWTHORNE

# Is Andrew Zimmern's Chinese restaurant

AS BAD AS EVERYONE SAYS IT IS?

There's a reason the "press" section of Lucky Cricket's website hasn't really been updated since the restaurant opened in November.

There hasn't been any good press. "Andrew Zimmern's Lucky Cricket is more than a controversy. It's also a bad restaurant," current San Francisco Chronicle critic Soleil Ho wrote for Eater. The Growler's December review, "(Un)Lucky Cricket," called the Chinese-restaurant-slash-tiki-bar a "cautionary tale

for building a restaurant on a foundation of contradictions." Eater's Twin Cities-based division contrasted promotional photos from the website with ones of the food that actually landed on tables—a "spot-the-difference" challenge that would have been the easiest ever published by Highlights Magazine.

For a city where reviews from food media tend to fall between "neutral" and "hyperbolically congratulatory," it was a departure—especially considering Zim-

mern's reputation around town. How did the popular Twin Cities-based TV personality find himself under the food world's equivalent of an electron microscope?

Well, because of that controversy Eater referred to. The day after Lucky Cricket opened in St. Louis

Park's Shops at West End, Fast Company ran a lengthy video interview with the celeb chef in which he hypothesized that Midwesterners "wouldn't get" big-city Chinese cuisine. "So what I have to do

is I have to introduce them to hot chile oil, and introduce them to a hand-cut noodle, and introduce them to a real roast duck," he said, proclaiming that his restaurant—the first of a chain he hoped to build—would be of a higher caliber than those other Chinese restaurants.

Then, there was the soundbite that sealed his fate:

"I think I'm saving the souls of all the people from having to dine at these horseshit restaurants masquerading as Chinese food that are in the Midwest."

Oof, people did not like that. It's the quote that caught Eater's eye in the first place, and

BY EMILY CASSEL

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LUCY HAWTHORNE



**Top:** Made-for-sharing entrees are a parade of hits and misses. **Left:** Double Happiness—a fruity rum punch—serves two to four. More importantly, it's served in a bright-blue puffer fish.

that later made Zimmern the subject of a scathing editorial in the Washington Post. And while he apologized that same week, his boastful claims almost certainly contributed to the no-holds-barred nature of early reviews in which dishes were lambasted for, among other things, tasting “strongly and unmistakably of cigarette ash.”

But dammit, do we love an underdog. And walking in for lunch on a snowy February afternoon, we couldn't help hoping that—for the sake of our stomachs and this story—it wouldn't be as bad as billed.

With the restaurant largely empty, we were invited to sit wherever we wanted—and after learning that a table inside a canvas-topped car was an option, we took

it. A smiling server appeared instantly to take our drink order and reappeared with tall tiki glasses. At their recommendation, we picked some small plates from the dim sum menu: chicken wings and shrimp toast rolls. We also went for a sandwich each.

So far, so good. We sat and slurped—knees bumping beneath the tiny table we picked for the sake of the gag—and took in the surroundings.

Like a restaurant in the third-floor kitsch corner at the Mall of America, Lucky Cricket is the kind of place that wants to make you feel that fun is mandatory. In fact, with the thatched straw hanging over the tiki bar, dangling fishing baskets in the dining room, a bamboo roof, and

a neon-green bartop, it's all but directly situated at the center of a Margaritaville/Rainforest Cafe/Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Venn diagram. It even has a little gift shop.

Service was similarly streamlined. Our snacks emerged almost as speedily as the drinks—at least, one of them did. A kitchen mix-up meant the shrimp bites were nowhere to be found, with spring rolls in their place.

Here, we found ourselves hoping against hope that the error wouldn't be a harbinger. Because when we say “everyone” thinks Lucky Cricket is bad, we mean it's not just the capital-c critics who have been piling on. On Yelp, people have continued to complain about exactly this kind of kitchen confusion, along with lengthy wait times, limited menus, bad service, high prices, and shitty food. Right now, the not-so-lucky restaurant's rating sits at three stars—same as the Taco Bell on Lake Street.

The wings turned out to be hefty, meaty little numbers, but with a glaze that lacked the addictive oomph you want from finger

foods. In the words of my companion: “God, I wish they'd just inject these babies with MSG.” Shrimp toast rolls, when they arrived, were tasty little tubes of seafood in a shell fried to crispy perfection. But inside—perhaps because they were rushed—uncooked batter congealed into a less-than-satisfying squish. (We still ate them all; do with that information what you will.)

Sandwiches fared somewhat better. A pork-and-shrimp patty on the Shu Mai Burger is clever, even if it does leave you feeling like you ordered a health-food burger; and a fried chicken sandwich positively piles chicken and cabbage atop a squishy bun. But our favorite thing about lunch might've been the chips served on the side: eye-catching little discs of fried lotus root.

Dinner at Lucky Cricket is similarly hit or miss—something “yay,” something “boo,” something “okay,” something “ew.” Hot and Cold Cucumbers are a slimy mess; Szechuan Style Eggplant is a lovely mix of sweet and savory. Dan Dan Noodles were all oil and no flavor; Hand Cut Noodles danced deliciously in a stir fry of braised lamb and bean sprouts.

There's salt-and-pepper calamari that doesn't appear to have touched either of those spices, but we'd drizzle its garlicky, honey-laced “dragon dipping sauce” over anything, and accompanying Shishito peppers were a nice touch. We unequivocally caution against the menu's priciest offering—the \$25 Roast Half Rohan Duck—which was a tasteless, flaccid letdown. Go for the nicely spicy Shanghai Fried Chicken and Waffle instead.

It makes more sense to order a fried chicken and bubble waffle combo here anyway. This is a restaurant that wants you to have fun, and that's a meal that screams, “No, seriously! Have it!”

The weird thing about Lucky Cricket is that we knew what Zimmern wanted was to make an over-the-top Chinese restaurant/tiki bar chain. They're selling T-shirts! There's a giant head spewing out slushies behind the bar! They're playing ska, for chrissakes! It didn't need to be so serious.

But he fucked up when he positioned himself as Lo Mein Jesus and made this a battle for our souls

rather than what it is: a pretty average place, food-wise, where you can have a slightly above-average time. In a world where that interview doesn't exist, we might all have sipped shareable cocktails from fishbowls, shrugged at the underseasoned entrees, and left—indifferent, but not enraged. There's nothing wrong with a restaurant that exists for

Lucky Cricket  
is the kind of  
place that wants  
to make you  
feel that fun is  
mandatory.

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LUCY HAWTHORNE

The bubble waffle reappears at dessert—this time, stuffed with soft serve, fruit, and "pizzazz" (which we're pretty sure was Pop Rocks).

fun—I love Margaritaville. It's also not exactly what I'd pick if someone asked where to get the best food in town. I don't think Jimmy Buffett would, either.

As for whether Lucky Cricket will save your Midwestern soul... I mean, of course not. It's a restaurant in a suburban shopping center, and its owner hopes to someday make it a chain of several hundred. Three out of five stars—well, that seems about right.

Is it as bad as it's made out to be? I don't think so. There are good dishes: a savory and serviceable Kung Pao Shrimp, those hand-cut noodles. The boozy slushies are sweet (and strong) as hell, but in a nice way—like you're busting out the blender during spring break. You can get Bia Saigon here, a treat for beer drinkers who likely haven't seen it at a ton of other Twin Cities restaurants.

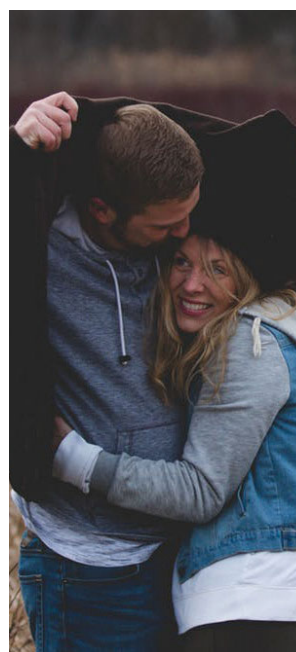
Is it worth going out of your way for? Eh, probably also no. If you're looking to down a Mai Tai or two before a movie, or need to stop for a bite somewhere after you return a shirt to Anthropologie, you could do worse. The curious can dine during happy hour—

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it runs from 3 to 6 and 8 to close Monday through Thursday with a 9 p.m. start on Fridays, so you

almost have to try to miss it—and glug from a selection of \$7 tiki drinks while munching on \$5 to \$8 dishes. If the food is only fair, well, at least the prices are too.

And those seriously seeking redemption with a side of hoisin... well, maybe worship at the altar of Tea House on University instead. ☐



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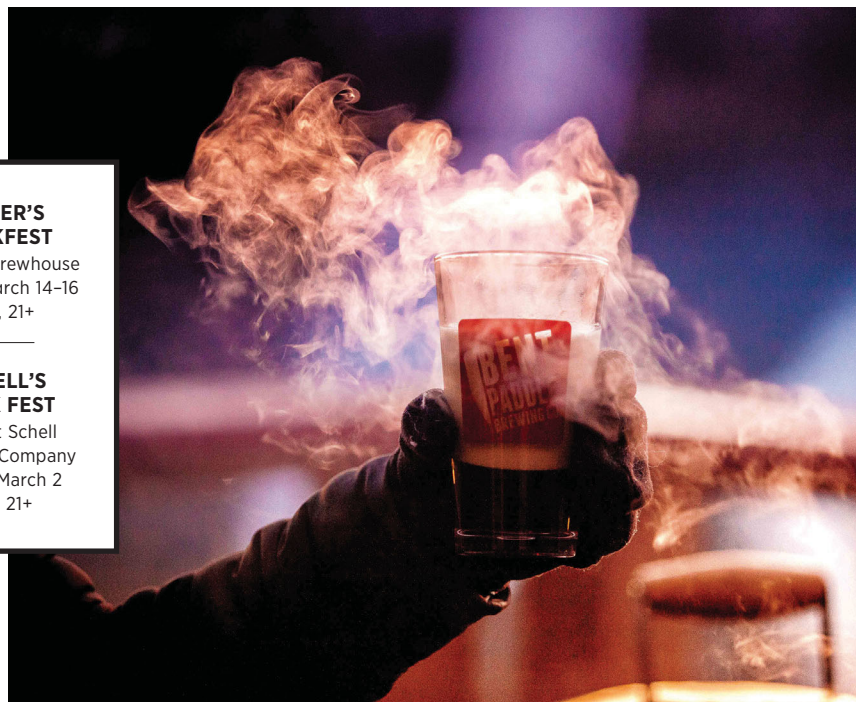
# HOT ROD

Go ahead, stick a flaming-hot poker in your pint glass



**FITGER'S BOCKFEST**  
Fitger's Brewhouse  
5 p.m. March 14-16  
free, 21+

**SCHELL'S BOCK FEST**  
August Schell  
Brewing Company  
11 a.m. March 2  
\$10, 21+



MAXWELL MCGRUDER

BY JERARD FAGERBERG

**B**eer trends of the past three years have gotten stranger and stranger, but the latest craze is something straight out of a Stefon sketch.

"It's that thing of when, like, a man in lederhosen quenches a fireplace poker in your stein of German lager..."

"Beer poking" is the practice of caramelizing beer with a two-foot steel rod called a "loggerhead" that's been heated over smoldering embers. The tradition is, of course, German in origin, and it historically took place to commemorate Doppelbock season in late winter or early spring. Now, thanks to the dangerous and seemingly limitless curiosity of American drinkers, it's making a resurgence.

Austin, Texas' Strange Land Brewery made national news when they hosted their first beer poking in 2017, but unsurprisingly, Minnesota has been ground zero for the phenomenon. Fitger's Brewhouse and Lake Superior Brewing have been giving bocks the brûlée treatment at their joint Bockfest for some years, and just last month, Northbound Smokehouse offered patrons

the chance to warm up their Eisbock with red-hot rebar.

Dig a bit deeper, and you'll find it was New Ulm's August Schell Brewing Company that modernized and Americanized beer poking way back in 1986. "We've been doing this for 30 years," says Ted Marti, president of August Schell. Marti's been at the helm of August Schell since before their very first Bock Fest, when he claims fire-poking beer was innovated. "It was an old German tradition. When they went to the bar, they didn't like cold beer, so they literally had warmers, little warmer sticks, that they'd use to warm up the beer a little bit."

Marti posits that those old Germans probably didn't use iron fire pokers like Schell's does at Bock Fest, but the effect on the beer is the same today as it was then. Inserting the extra-hot iron caramelizes sugar in the beer. The added layer of browning makes a poked Bock taste like s'mores or dulce de leche.

Dark beers like stouts and brown ales are most pleasantly affected by hot poking. (Beer website October found that, were you to inject a near-molten core of iron

into, say, a Yuengling, it would actually suck quite a bit.) Doppelbocks, eisenbocks, and occasionally mailbocks are the most popular styles for poking—not only for the sake of tradition but also because of their pervasive nuttiness and sweetness.

"When you bring up the temperature of beer, you get a torrent of aromatics," Marti says. "When you do it with the fire pokers, it's a whole different flavor."

The loggerhead itself was a common tool for 19th-century shipbuilders, but pub owners would keep them on hand to warm drinks (such as the traditional rum flip) and cauterize wounds. They're far less common today, thus the pokers and rebar, but that's changing as well.

Bent Paddle started hot-poking beers at their Festiversary celebration, and it's something they carried into the ski party they hosted in Lutsen last January. They got into the practice for the same reason as Schell's: A smoldering loggerhead makes drinking beer outside in winter just a little bit more bearable. "You're left with a distinctive, almost roasted or burned marshmallow flavor," says Bent Paddle co-founder and CEO Bryon Tonniss. "It also beats some

of the carbonation out of the beer, so it's a thicker, creamier experience."

On January 14, Bent Paddle released their Doppelbock German-Style Ale (a former entry in their one-off Valve Jockey series), and they hopped on Facebook to encourage their drinkers to try poking it at home.

For that, there's the Beer Caramelizer, a Wisconsin-made loggerhead explicitly used for caramelizing beers. The product, one of a few on the market, lets pyromaniac beer nerds take the fun of Bock Fest home. That way, you won't have to ruin your hair straightener to get a toasty warm beer.

Though tickled by the idea of the Beer Caramelizer, Tonniss doesn't suggest running household implements over the stove and plunging them into pints for kicks. Beer poking needs a certain context to be effective. It requires a certain moment.

"Hang out at a campfire, drink some beer, and poke it," Tonniss says. "It's less about altering the beer in some kind of way; it's more about the experience of gathering together outside around a fire in winter and doing kinda cool stuff that people don't do on a regular basis."

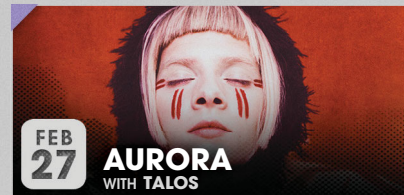
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## FIRST AVENUE MAINROOM UP NEXT

🏆 BEST DANCE CLUB (READER'S CHOICE), BEST CONCERT VENUE (READER'S CHOICE)  
- CITY PAGES 2018



FEB 27  
**AURORA**  
WITH TALOS



FEB 28  
89.3 THE CURRENT AND CITY PAGES PRESENT  
**JOHN MAUS**  
WITH Lukdix



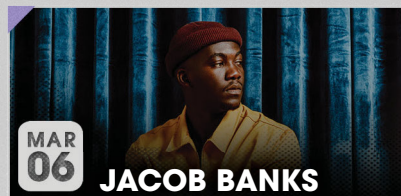
MAR 01  
89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**I'M WITH HER**  
WINTER TOUR 2019  
WITH MIPSO



MAR 02  
**MARDI GRAS IN MPLS FT. COWBOY MOUTH AND DRIVIN' N CRYIN'**  
WITH JACK BRASS BAND



MAR 03  
GO 96.3 PRESENTS  
**ANDREW MCMAHON IN THE WILDERNESS**  
UPSIDE DOWN FLOWERS TOUR  
WITH FLOR, GRIZFOLK



MAR 06  
**JACOB BANKS**



MAR 08  
**YONDER MOUNTAIN STRING BAND AND HORSESHOES & HAND GRENADES**  
WITH FIRESIDE COLLECTIVE



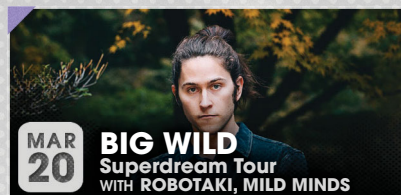
MAR 10  
89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**MIKE DOUGHTY**  
plays Soul Coughing's *Ruby Vroom* 25th Anniversary Tour  
WITH WHEATUS  
NIGHT 1 SOLD OUT!



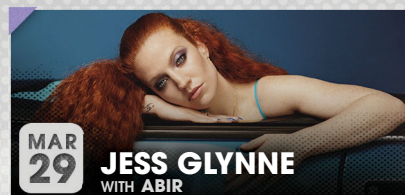
MAR 15  
FOREVER YOUNG PRESENTS  
**HOTLANTA**  
A DANCE PARTY CELEBRATING THE ATL SOUND  
WITH DJ IZZIE P, GREENERY



MAR 16  
**FLIP PHONE XXL SPRING BREAK STARRING FARRAH MOAN (RuPaul's Drag Race)**  
WITH PHI PHI O'HARA, TYGRA, VINCENT THE DESTROYER, SUNNY KIRIYAMA



MAR 20  
**BIG WILD**  
Superdream Tour  
WITH ROBOTAKI, MILD MINDS



MAR 29  
**JESS GLYNNE**  
WITH ABIR



MAR 30  
**TREVOR HALL**  
The Moon Sun Tour  
WITH DIRTWIRE



APR 01  
**EPIK HIGH**



APR 11  
**STICK FIGURE**  
On the Rocks Tour  
WITH THE MOVEMENT, THE ELOVATERS



APR 18  
**TIM HEIDECKER AND GREGG TURKINGTON**  
On Cinema  
At The Cinema Live!



APR 23  
**EELS**



APR 24  
89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**SON VOLT**



APR 28  
**TAKING BACK SUNDAY**  
WITH THE MAINE  
NIGHT 1 SOLD OUT!



APR 30  
**FOALS**  
WITH PREOCCUPATIONS, OMNI



MAY 02  
89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**SUPERORGANISM**



MAY 03  
**MANIC FOCUS**  
Star Sweeper Tour  
WITH RUSS LIQUID



MAY 04  
**GEAR DADDIES**



MAY 07  
GO 96.3 PRESENTS  
**DIRTY HEADS**  
WITH THE HIP ABDUCTION

## 7TH ST ENTRY UP NEXT

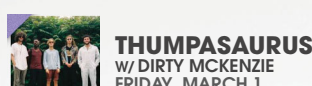
🏆 BEST CONCERT VENUE  
- CITY PAGES 2018



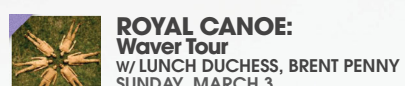
**ANDY FRASCO & THE U.N.**  
w/ WILD ADRIATIC  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27



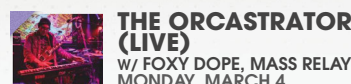
**PARKER GISPERT**  
(of The Whigs)  
w/ SAM CASSIDY, ANDREW LEAHEY  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28



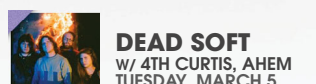
**THUMPASAURUS**  
w/ LUNCH DUCHESS, BRENT PENNY  
FRIDAY, MARCH 1



**ROYAL CANOE:**  
Waver Tour  
w/ LUNCH DUCHESS, BRENT PENNY  
SUNDAY, MARCH 3



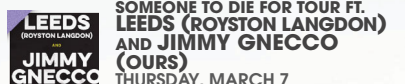
**THE ORCASTRATOR (LIVE)**  
w/ FOXY DOPE, MASS RELAY  
MONDAY, MARCH 4



**DEAD SOFT**  
w/ FOXY DOPE, AHAM  
TUESDAY, MARCH 5



**DANIEL ROMANO**  
w/ RED DAUGHTERS, OSCAR TENGO  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6



**LEEDS**  
(ROYSTON LANGDON)  
AND JIMMY GNECCO  
(OURS)  
THURSDAY, MARCH 7

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## PALACE THEATRE UP NEXT



MAR 04  
**JAMES BLAKE**  
w/ KHUSHI



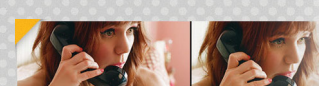
MAR 09  
**THE REVIVALISTS**  
Take Good Care Tour  
w/ RAYLAND BAXTER



MAR 19  
**BOB WEIR AND WOLF BROS**



MAR 23  
**ST. PAUL & THE BROKEN BONES**  
w/ MICHAEL NAU (COTTON JONES)



MAR 29  
**JENNY LEWIS**  
ON THE LINE TOUR 2019



MAR 30  
**BOB MOULD BAND**  
SUNSHINE ROCK TOUR  
w/ PORCUPINE

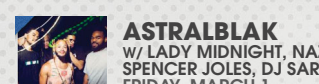


MAY 03  
**AN EVENING WITH THE TALLEST MAN ON EARTH**

## FINE LINE UP NEXT



**J BOOG**  
Rose Petals Winter Tour  
w/ EarthKry, Eddy Dyno  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27



**ASTRALBLAK**  
w/ LADY MIDNIGHT, NAZEEM & SPENCER JOLES, DJ SARAH WHITE  
FRIDAY, MARCH 1



**HUSTLE ROSE, JACKSON & THE ROOSTERS, AND FAITH BOBLETT**  
SATURDAY, MARCH 2



**THE CHILLS**  
w/ BRION STARR, FLAVOR CRYSTALS, DJ JAKE RUDH  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28



**JULIA HOLT**  
w/ JESSICA MOSS  
FRIDAY, MARCH 1



**EMPRESS OF**  
w/ SALT CATHEDRAL  
SATURDAY, MARCH 2



**LILY & MADELEINE**  
w/ BROTHER BIRD  
SUNDAY, MARCH 3



**WHO? WEEKLY**  
THE CEDAR  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28



**ÁSGEIR**  
THE CEDAR  
TUESDAY, MARCH 19



**ADRIAN BELEW**  
w/ SAUL ZONANA  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6



**MAC IRV**  
w/ MAC TURNER & PRINCE RILEY, TAE SUPREME, SOLO STAR  
FRIDAY, MARCH 8



**ALL THEM WITCHES**  
w/ PLAGUE VENDOR  
SATURDAY, MARCH 9



**JAKE LA BOTZ**  
SOLO ACOUSTIC TOUR  
w/ ERIK KOSKINEN (SOLO)  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6



**ELECTRIC FEEL:**  
2000s INDIE DANCE PARTY  
w/ FoolProof  
FRIDAY, MARCH 8



**WILLIAM RYAN KEY**  
(FORMERLY OF YELLOWCARD)  
THE VIRTUE TOUR  
w/ SELFISH THINGS, CORY WELLS  
SUNDAY, MARCH 10



**LIZ COOPER AND THE STAMPEDE**  
w/ THE GO ROUNDS  
TUESDAY, MARCH 12

## JUST ANNOUNCED



SAT JULY 13  
**THE STRUTS**  
YOUNG & DANGEROUS TOUR 2019  
WITH THE GLORIOUS SONS  
PALACE THEATRE \$29.50+ / 6:30PM DOORS / 18+

## COMING SOON



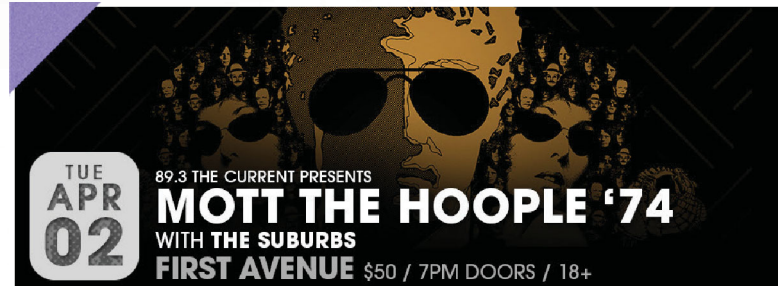
TUE MAR 12  
**JUNGLE**  
WITH HOUSES  
FIRST AVENUE \$20/\$22 / 7PM DOORS / 18+



THU MAR 21  
**TORI KELLY**  
THE ACOUSTIC SESSIONS  
PALACE THEATRE \$35+ / 6:30PM DOORS / ALL AGES



93X THE PIT PRESENTS  
**UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS AND GRAVEYARD**  
PEACE ACROSS THE WASTELAND TOUR  
WITH DEMOB HAPPY  
FIRST AVENUE \$25 / 6PM DOORS / 18+



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**MOTT THE HOOPLE '74**  
WITH THE SUBURBS  
FIRST AVENUE \$50 / 7PM DOORS / 18+

# A LIST

**FRI** Alternative Motion Project kicks off its 8th season **p. 17**

**SAT** Can Can welcomes *Dr. Who* fans **p. 19**

**SUN** Queens compete to be Miss LUSH 2019 **p. 19**

Rock icon Kim Gordon and choreographer Dimitri Chamblas perform at the American Swedish Institute.



MANUELA DALLE

## WEDNESDAY 2.27

### BARHOPPING/FOOD

#### BACON & BEER DAYS

URBAN GROWLER BREWING COMPANY

At Urban Growler, the staff enjoy two things during every shift: a beer and a bit of bacon. The team will be sharing these two loves with their customers this week (Wednesday is National Pig Day, after all) when they'll create a flight that pairs five specialty beers with crisp, smoked, salted pork. The beer menu is yet to be fully released, but it will include a dark coffee stout, a sweet maple California common, a rum-barrel aged porter, and Cowbell Cream Ale, their versatile flagship brew. Pig out on other treats as well, such as bacon mac 'n' cheese, BLTs, candied bacon, and a one-time bacon sampler plate. 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Free. 2325

Endicott St., St. Paul; 651-340-5793.

**Through Thursday —LOREN GREEN**

### COMEDY

#### PETE LEE

ACME COMEDY CO.

Back in December, Pete Lee appeared on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* for the fourth time. While that would be a bragging point for a lot of comedians, Lee, always humble, grateful, and pleasant, isn't one for that. His memory of the night before is almost as entertaining as his jokes were. "I slept on an air mattress in my empty apartment," he recalls. "I had already packed up everything and gotten rid of my furniture to move out to Los Angeles, so I only had the air mattress and my suit hanging up on the other side of the room." This week, one of the funniest and most likeable comedians to ever come out of Acme will

return to the place where he got his start. "I just celebrated my 21st anniversary in comedy," he says. "I did my very first set at Acme, so to be able to come back and get to be a part of the club is really special to me." In addition to his late-night appearances and nonstop touring schedule, Lee can be seen regularly on Comedy Central's *This Week at the Comedy Cellar*, talking about whatever's going on in the world at the moment. But even with all of his success, he still gets just as charged up for Acme as he did over two decades ago. "Louis [Lee, Acme's owner] has been such a mentor to me," he says. "I have so many great friends there, and getting to work with the newer comics is so much fun." 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday —PATRICK STRAIT**

## THURSDAY 2.28

### COMEDY

#### AIDA RODRIGUEZ

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

People have all kinds of jobs before becoming standup comics. Aida Rodriguez was a model. "I started when I was in high school," she says. "I've always been very tall. I did enjoy it to some degree, but it just wasn't for me. I got tired of being hungry all the time." A self-described goofball, she was always drawn to comedy. "My mom told me recently that when I was little I used to grab a broomstick and be the entertainment in our house. So I finally came back to my first love." Born in Boston, Rodriguez didn't spend much time in Beantown, as her parents soon moved to the Dominican Republic. "My father was an undocumented worker,"

## THURSDAY

## ART/GALLERY

JODI REEB; RE-IMAGINED  
LANDSCAPES

CONCORDIA GALLERY

The polar vortex and an accident with the city's water main disrupted the opening reception in January for artist Jodi Reeb's latest exhibition, "Re-imagined Landscapes," at Concordia Gallery. This week, she's giving it another try. The show features Reeb's mixed-media work, created using photographs and encaustic paint (aka melted beeswax). The effect is luminous, with pieces that have an almost cinematic quality, and somehow also evoke the melancholy mood of a rainy day. Reeb focuses on the horizon line for this collection, exploring its metaphorical possibilities as she uses her memory to recreate landscapes. Meanwhile, sculptor Priya Thoresen's latest exhibition, "Material Presence," uses ceramic materials in unconventional ways to create three-dimensional objects. The public reception on Thursday, February 28, from 5 to 7 p.m. will celebrate both shows, which are running concurrently in the space. 1301 Marshall Ave., Concordia University, St. Paul; 651-641-8278. **Through March 1**—SHEILA REGAN



JODI REEB, IN THE BREEZE

## CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

she explains. She eventually moved with her Puerto Rican mother to that island. "We then moved to south Florida so I could have a better life." It was while doing Jamie Foxx's radio show that she finally decided to do standup. "They kept telling me, 'You should be doing standup.' So one day I just did it. And I kept going back and here I am." Rodriguez's sometimes bawdy set focuses mostly on relationships and her day-to-day life. 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$16-\$23. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday**—P.F. WILSON

## BARHOPPING

## THIRD BIRTHDAY PARTY

NORSEMAN DISTILLERY

This week, Norseman Distillery is turning three with a three-day party. Scheduled events include art, booze, and prize giveaways. Guest bartenders will sling a variety of tasty drinks: Michael Senich (Fhima) will be in on Thursday, Jon Olson (Esker Grove) takes over Friday, and the grand finale on Saturday will feature both dudes making drinks. Things kick off on Thursday with the opening of a gallery show featuring work by self-taught abstract artist Emily Quandahl, and a boombox-themed mural reveal from Impulse Creative. Jon Wipfli's Animales BBQ food truck will be stopping by on Friday and Saturday to

serve up meat and other eats, and tattoo artist Taylor Dees will be onsite inking interested folks. Revelers will also have a chance to win a coveted Norseman coin, a pretty penny that scores you a free drink at the bar on each visit. Every drink you order during the party enters you to win, or you can make a bid for one during the daily auctions, the proceeds of which will benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. 4 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 1 p.m. Saturday. Free. 451 Taft St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-568-6299. **Through Saturday**—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

## FRIDAY 3.1

## DANCE

ALTERNATIVE  
MOTION PROJECT: 8

THE LAB THEATER

For its eighth season, Alternative Motion Project (AMP) pulls out all the stops. The program includes three world premieres: a whirlwind for nine dancers with music performed live by the 55-person Symphonic Winds with soprano Lindsay Kesselman, a piece by Laura Selle Virtucio with an original score by sound designer Dan Dukich, and a piece influenced by a survey sent to supporters. A fourth work, a duet for two women, debuted during Doug Varone's choreographic mentorship program last year. That aural and kinetic feast explores a panoply of emotions and relationships with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 ►

WINTER  
AT THE ORDWAY

BOYZ II MEN

MAR 31



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MAY 4

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10:00PM  
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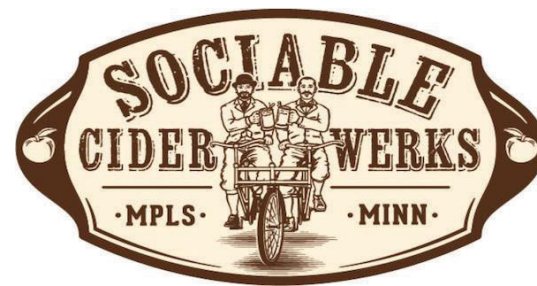
You're invited to join us in celebrating our 20 years of leading people to the power of playfulness and feats of imagination! All proceeds go towards matching funding for Z Puppets' newest work: Through the Narrows, premiering June 2019.

### Z PUPPETS ROSENSCHNOZ

4054 Chicago Avenue S • Minneapolis, MN

MAR  
10

9:30AM  
TO  
10:30PM  
—  
\$145



## Morning Versative Vinyasa

Join our monthly versative (flexible; adaptable) vinyasa yoga event at Sociable with Annie Hayes Wellness. Don't like beer we have you covered with a cider and conversation after class. All levels and humans welcome. Bring a mat and a smile.

### SOCIABLE CIDER WERKS

1500 Fillmore Street NE • St. Paul, MN

MAR  
23

7:00PM  
TO  
12:00AM  
—  
\$15-\$40



## Coup de Carnivale 2019

Featuring over 20 national and local acts from notable burlesque and drag performers, professional fire hoops and fans, aerialists, stilt-walkers, Tarot readers, amazing aerialists, singers, dancers, and sliding-scale donations for entry starting at \$20 (\$16 for groups of 4+ if you purchase online)! You're officially out of reasons to not join the mayhem.

### FALLOUT URBAN ARTS CENTER STUDIO 3

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APR  
5

6:00PM  
TO  
9:00PM  
—  
\$33



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## A-LIST

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

Varone's choreographic mentorship program last year. That aural and kinetic feast explores a panoply of emotions and relationships with verve. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday (post-show events follow); 2 p.m. (ASL interpreted). \$17-\$20; pay-as-able Sunday. 700 N. First St., Minneapolis. **Through Sunday —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

### COMEDY

## GABRIEL RUTLEDGE

JOKE JOINT AT CAMP BAR

At first glance you might mistake comedian Gabriel Rutledge for musician Dave Grohl. "I do look super northwest, there's no getting around that," he says with a laugh. "Before I had long hair and a beard I got a lot of Tim Curry, but as soon as I grew the beard it was Dave Grohl." Coincidentally, Rutledge used to be a rock drummer. "I was in a few bands that toured the country," he says. "I was almost 27 when I started comedy." It was on a whim that he went to an open mic at the Comedy Underground in Seattle. "I liked it enough to keep going back." He was also encouraged by the apparent lack of competition. "It's nice to compare yourself to other open-mic comedians because some of them are legit insane people. You think, 'You know what? I'm pretty good. This makes a lot of sense.'" Not one for current events, Rutledge talks about his personal life and being a—mostly—stay-at-home dad. 8 p.m. Friday; 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$20-\$25. 490 Robert St. N., St. Paul; 651-330-9078. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**

### THEATER

## MAMMA MIA!

CHANHASSEN DINNER THEATRES

There's a fitting symmetry to *Mamma Mia!*, the tremendously popular Broadway musical inspired by the tremendously popular songs of ABBA. While the group's output was sometimes critically dismissed as insubstantial pop, such assessments tended to overlook the Swedish band's inspired mastery of cascading harmonies and soaring melodies. The invigorating power of ABBA's music remains undeniable, especially when a dance floor is involved. Such music also happens to make the perfect soundtrack for a jukebox musical, as recognized by British playwright Catherine Johnson, who, utilizing a catalog of ABBA tunes, crafted an escapist tale of romantic longing. Set on a fictional Greek island, the story follows a young woman who



Joffrey turns  
*Anna Karenina*  
into a dance.

CHERYL MANN

is determined to identify her biological father on the eve of her nuptials. Because Dad could be one of three men, each is invited to the wedding, an action that unsettles the lives of all involved, especially her mother, who long resolved to keep these relationships in the past. Bursting with a nonstop array of romantic complications, this Michael Brindisi-directed work makes no apologies for its aspirations to intoxicate audiences with immaculately crafted pop. Showtimes vary, check online at [www.chanhassendt.com](http://www.chanhassendt.com). \$53-\$93. 501 W. 78th St., Chanhassen; 952-934-1525. **Through September 28 —BRAD RICHASON**

## SATURDAY 3.2

### DANCE

## THE JOFFREY BALLET

NORTHROP

Fresh off its recent world premiere in Chicago, the resplendent Joffrey Ballet company's newest work, *Anna Karenina*, packs Tolstoy's 800-page novel of passion and power into 13 brisk scenes with a running time of two hours. Created by choreographer Yuri Possokhov, with music by Ilya Demutsky (performed with live orchestra), the two-act work tells the tale of a married noblewoman who succumbs to Count Vronsky, a dashing yet ignoble cavalry officer. The impeccable dancers, performing classical ballet in the midst of dazzling contemporary stagecraft, convey an imaginative staging of the story. Possokhov has been lavished with critical and popular acclaim for transforming the canonical novel into a 21st-century ballet. 7:30 p.m. Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday. \$33-\$75. 84 Church

St. SE, Minneapolis; 612-624-2345.

**Through Sunday —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

### PARTY

## DR. WHO PARTY

CAN CAN WONDERLAND

This Saturday, the Doctor and friends will arrive in our present day to party in St. Paul. The evening will feature a variety of performance, cosplay, and spectacle in the already surreal Can Can Wonderland space. Burlesque performers and drag artists will be geeking out, *Dr. Who*-style. Sexy shimmying in a fez, drag angels, and disco-fueled Daleks are all on the table. Test your knowledge of this epic, multi-decade-spanning show during a trivia session, and hit the dance floor until your TARDIS calls you home. 21+. 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. \$5. 755 Prior Ave. N., Ste. 004, St. Paul; 651-925-2261. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

## SUNDAY 3.3

### COMEDY

## DEMETRI MARTIN

HISTORIC STATE THEATRE

Formerly a staff writer for *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* and once a regular on *The Daily Show*, 45-year-old Demetri Martin has cultivated a wryly detached persona fixated on the eccentricities of everyday minutia. Through his singular blend of cerebral absurdities and clever one-liners, Martin has refined his signature approach to comedy. His offbeat focus has yielded a plethora of material, including his most recent release for Netflix, *The Overthinker*. Through it all, Martin's cult following can rely on his performances to incorporate a mixture of droll quips, self-performed musical backing, and an oversized sketch pad, which he uses to document idiosyncratic

notions. Less predictable has been Martin's new willingness to inject more personal diversions into his act. Delving into anecdotal storytelling has lent an entirely new dimension to his material, one that invites far more relatability without sacrificing any of his anomalous humor or wired creativity. 8 p.m. \$39.50. 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. **—BRAD RICHASON**

### DRAG

## MISS LUSH PAGEANT 2019

LUSH

While many pageant shows have grown dated, stale, or downright creepy, drag pageantry continues to give us the glitz, tackiness, and glamour at the heart of these competitions. This Sunday, up to 10 queens will vie for the jewel-encrusted crown that will make them Miss LUSH. To win, they'll have to jump through a variety of hoops in three challenging categories. First, they'll strut on the catwalk in their boldest couture. Then they will charm judges with their wit, eloquence, and sass during an interview. Finally, the talent show portion should keep things weird and wild until reigning queen Kamaree Williams bestows her crown upon this year's winner. 18+. 7 to 10 p.m. \$10. 990 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-208-0358. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

## MONDAY 3.4

### MUSIC

## KIM GORDON AND DIMITRI CHAMBLAS

AMERICAN SWEDISH INSTITUTE

A renowned choreographer and a rock icon will come together at the American Swedish Institute this week for a wild performance organized by St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's Liquid Music series. French dance-maker Dimitri Chamblas (dean of CalArts) will team up with alt-queen Kim Gordon (Sonic Youth). She will create sounds, he will respond with movement, and vice versa. Watch them strum, vibrate, huddle, and soar together in this free-form work birthed in the museum's galleries. Guests are encouraged to arrive early for cocktails and to explore ASI's current exhibitions, which include the surreal artwork of Erik Johansson. The performance will take place in the grand hall, followed by a post-performance talk with the dynamic duo. Find tickets and more info at [www.liquidmusic.org](http://www.liquidmusic.org). 7:30 p.m. Monday and Tuesday. \$50; tickets are sold out (wait list available). 2600 Park Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-871-4907. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

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**FRI 3/08**  
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**POWERHOUSE**  
SAWYERS DREAM, JOYANN PARKER  
ANNIE MACK, & MAE SIMPSON

**SAT 3/09**  
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**Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd & The Doors Tributes**

**3/23**  
**SlugWife**

**3/28**  
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**4/6**  
**Stevie Ray Vaughan Tribute**

**4/12**  
**Sunaquabi**

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# THE THIRD REEL

The *How to Train Your Dragon* trilogy culminates with *The Hidden World*



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BY TONY LIBERA

**T**he third entry in almost every trilogy is the worst of the bunch, but don't let that dampen excitement for *How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World*. This is an all-around awesome franchise, so even though *The Hidden World* is undeniably the weakest of the three movies, it's still a heartwarming and eye-popping conclusion.

This installment takes place a year after *How to Train Your Dragon 2*. Hiccup (Jay Baruchel) and his dragon, Night Fury Toothless, join their buddies to scour the seas around their native Berk in search of captured dragons to free. After one successful nighttime raid, the heroes return to their home, which has become extremely crowded with dragons and humans alike. Meanwhile, the warlords whose ships Hiccup and friends have been ransacking decide to enlist some outside help from a nefarious man named Grimmel (F. Murray Abraham), whose lifelong obsession is to kill all the Night Furies.

Following a couple close calls with the bad guy, Hiccup decides the only

way dragons will ever be safe from evil men is if they can escape to their fabled ancestral home. So the citizens of Berk uproot and head west into the unknown, hoping to find the Hidden World.

Part of what sets this movie a notch below the others is just how redundant the plot feels. There's not much of a new storyline here beyond the El Dorado quest—which ends up being something of an afterthought anyway. The villain is one-dimensional, and in terms of scale, it feels a bit like *The Hidden World* might have fit better as the middle chapter rather than the finale. Fortunately, there's strong enough characterization throughout to keep this thing interesting. Animated characters too often stay the same or return to some status quo, but DreamWorks does a nice job of giving its central characters compelling arcs. Parting is such sweet sorrow, and the Hiccup/Toothless dynamic builds to an affecting climax.

As with its predecessors, the animation in *The Hidden World* is spectacular. Props to the filmmakers for continuing to find novel ways to make their new drag-

## HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD

directed by Dean DeBlois  
area theaters, now open

ons and this world stand out. The latest addition, a female "Light Fury" who's captured Toothless' eye, is one of the coolest dragons yet, turning invisible with a burst of flames, and Toothless himself has a few new tricks up his sleeve. The battle sequences are well choreographed, and the Hidden World is nothing short of stunning, a kind of psychedelic undersea dragon land that completely electrifies the screen. It's a shame so little time is spent there, especially since the movie is called *The Hidden World*, but maybe too much of a good thing would have made it less special.

Altogether, *The Hidden World* makes for another wonderful family adventure. This is allegedly the last film in the series, so things definitely turn bittersweet. But given how successful these movies have been, it's a safe bet we'll see another *How to Train Your Dragon* somewhere down the road. **B+**

# FRACTURED FAIRY TALES

TTT goes *Into the Woods*



PAULA KELLER

BY JAY GABLER

**T**en Thousand Things' production of *Into the Woods* is hardly typical, but at intermission on opening night it did produce a typical range of audience reactions. "That was delightful!" "So charming, and everything worked out!" "Wait...it's not over?" "The narrator said, 'To be continued.'"

Composer Stephen Sondheim and playwright James Lapine realized they needed to add that line after an early preview of the 1986 musical, when an usher had to run across the parking lot to stop a busload of satisfied theatergoers from rolling out. "There's more," the usher shouted, "there's more!"

Three decades later, it still feels subversive that *Into the Woods* dares to challenge the notion of "happily ever after." The play's second act is one of the most elaborate anticlimaxes in all of musical theater, to the point where it's hard not to feel a little abused. If anyone can keep you in the woods with these triumphant-turned-troubled characters, though, it's Ten Thousand Things.

In the first production she's led since becoming artistic director, Marcela Lorca keeps the company's accessible yet ambitious spirit very much intact. Its productions, which are staged in the round with lights up so they can tour to non-traditional venues, always require an illusionist's gift for theatrical sleight-of-hand, and that's particularly true of this sprawling musical.

Nine performers play more than twice that many characters, while also wielding

## INTO THE WOODS

Open Book/North Garden Theater  
Tenthousandthings.org; through March 24

instruments to support music director Peter Vitale, who performs the Olympic feat of doing a full-length Sondheim musical as a one-man band. It's a rewardingly fresh approach to this material, which can tempt producers to get bogged down with costumes and effects.

No effect (certainly not in the ill-judged Disney movie adaptation) could delight the way Jim Lichtscheidl's humble baker does as he steels himself to cut into the belly of a wolf, or could shock the way Rajané Katurah does with a piercing scream when her treasured red riding hood is stolen. This human-powered production highlights the characters' modesty, and their vulnerability.

The intimate approach also serves Sondheim's typically twisted lyrics, which come across beautifully in all their rapid-fire glory. Characters like Jack (Ben Lohrberg) and the Witch (Austene Van) subvert their archetypes with subtle gestures as well as broad comedy.

That makes this a must-see show for longtime fans, and a fine introduction for newcomers.

This production is one to celebrate, marking a new era for one of our most innovative and justly celebrated companies. Despite its varied downers, in the end the show sounds a note of hope in keeping with the occasion: Times change, but the power of great storytelling remains essential. **C**

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# HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

Tyler Michaels-King Photo by Allen Weeks

## HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

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# STREET *Style*

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## BILL BERGER

24, BIKE MECHANIC

### What are you wearing?

Balenciaga moto boots, 2008 Dolce & Gabbana multi-pocket pants, thrifted Florida shirt and Burberry scarf, Rick Owens buffalo leather jacket.

### Describe your style:

Functional and occasionally coordinated outfits.

### One piece of style advice you can share:

Be ahead of the wave by being your true self. Take the time to find it, they'll see.

### If your style were an era of art, what would it be?

I've been fortunate enough to be exposed to so many eras and sources of inspiration so it's hard to pin down.

### Who is your style icon?

Anyone who pushed the boundaries.



## NICK CARTWRIGHT

22, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

### What are you wearing?

Number Nine crewneck from 2002, custom denim pants I made, Sage Elsesser Converse.

### Describe your style:

808s and heartbreak.

### How does your art form/practice influence your sense of style?

My art form and mind change daily, which causes my style to too, so whatever I'm feeling that day is how I dress.

### If your style were an era of art, what would it be?

2011-2015: I don't know if that counts as an "era" but those were the golden years of street wear mixed with high fashion.

### One style trend you're happy to see leave:

Prada bags.



## SARAH NICOLE

24, ARTIST AND CURATORIAL ASSISTANT

### What are you wearing?

Pants are I.A.M.GIA, top is Free People, boots are Jeffrey Campbell, sweater is from the snow.

### Describe your style:

Normally all black.

### If your style were an era of art, what would it be?

New contemporary. I am influenced by what is trending now but also what is outside of pop culture, what will be now tomorrow.

### How does your art form/practice influence your sense of style?

My art makes me pay attention to the world around me.



## SADIE YVONNE

23, SALES AT NORDSTROM MEN'S

### What are you wearing?

Vintage Nordstrom jacket, Club Monaco cashmere sweater, Topshop pants, Gucci heels, Hermès scarf, Louis Vuitton side bag.

### Describe your style:

Timeless chic.

### Who is your biggest style influence?

I've always loved Mary Kate and Ashley, they pull off that timeless chic look so effortlessly.

### What staple items should everyone have in their closet?

Accessories. They can elevate an outfit to another level.

### If your style were an era of art, what would it be?

Whatever era of art Sarah Nicole's work falls under, it really speaks to me.

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**ZAQ BAKER**

**MONDAY MARCH 4** [FREE]  
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# NO WOMEN ALOUD

Country radio doesn't play some of country music's biggest stars. Because they're not men.

BY KEITH HARRIS

**O**K, this is getting ridiculous now.

Kacey Musgraves' latest album, *Golden Hour*, has been an awards magnet, reeling in CMAs long before the Grammys took note earlier this month. As compulsively likable as Musgraves herself, who is currently the musician most likely to follow the phrase "I don't like country but I do like...," *Golden Hour* updates a traditional array of soft-rock/easy-listening sounds with modern production that adds lushness and warmth. It was the number-four album in the U.S., and the number-one album on the country charts. If, as the old radio maxim has it, the secret to ratings success is not to play songs that people want to listen to but to not play songs they feel

compelled to turn off, Musgraves should be a programmer's dream.

But Musgraves doesn't have a home on country radio (or on pop radio, which is its own lost cause, but that's a topic for another time). That's hardly because she's "not country enough," whatever that means—and please do not read that as an invitation to tell us all whatever that means. Country music first went "pop" when Chet Atkins added strings in the '50s, or when Bob Wills hired a drummer in the '40s, or, hell, when Ralph Peer recorded Jimmie Rodgers in the '20s. There is no innate metaphysical quality that makes music "country." Like all radio formats, the only real definition of "country" is tautological: Country music is whatever country music fans listen to.

Unfortunately, what country music fans currently listen to, at least on the radio,

is men. So many men. Aside from Kelsea Ballerini and Miranda Lambert and Carrie Underwood (and one more notable exception we'll get to later), you can listen for hours in vain for a female voice. You'll find plenty of gender-ambiguous names on the charts, for sure. Jordan Davis? Riley Green? Morgan Wallen? Sorry, all dudes. And ideologically the songs themselves range from the innocuously heteronormative, like Scotty McCreery's "This Is It," to the downright paleolithic, with Luke Combs singing, "she's crazy but her crazy's beautiful to me," noting how long it takes his lover to get dressed, and quipping "it kinda scares me the way that she drives" before adding "me wild." Welcome to 2019, y'all.

Reigning commercial country duo Dan + Shay aren't as bad as all that. Theirs is a milder, more subtly pop answer to Florida Georgia Line. (Unfortunately, that "+" does not mean you should draw a big heart around their name and imagine them k-i-s-s-i-n-g.) On the duo's big hit, "Tequila," which rhymes the liquor with "see ya" and "need ya," they're just cute boys pining for the one that got away. Their other number-one this past year is "Speechless," about being lost for words by a beautiful woman.

Tellingly, there's not much difference in their vocal approach on either. Sorrowful, smitten—it's all the same to these fellas, who offer an unobtrusive kind of acoustic quiet storm for skittish young lovers.

The problem with Dan + Shay isn't that they're pop. The problem isn't that they're mediocre pop. Hell, the problem isn't even Dan + Shay. They, like Musgraves, aren't quite at the arena level, but where she played the Palace earlier this month, they played the much larger Armory last weekend. And that disparity in audience reach is the problem, because it's anchored in a disparity of institutional support that consistently skews male. Country music journalists, particularly the great Marissa R. Moss, have shown repeatedly how country music structurally restricts female artists' access to radio and to festivals, and, in conjunction with an ingrained culture of sexual harassment in Nashville, this holds female performers back.

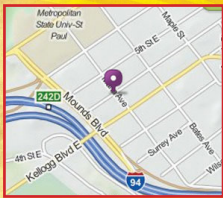
Most of them, anyway. Last year, in a kind of *Freaky Friday* moment, pop singer Bebe Rexha, whose previous success had been limited (by, among other things, her blankness), hooked up with Florida Georgia Line for the monster hit "Meant to Be." It spent a record-breaking 50 weeks atop the "Country Songs" charts. Meanwhile, country up-and-comer Maren Morris dominated pop radio, appearing on the not even remotely country Zedd single "The Middle." This switcheroo demonstrated the porousness of genre and format in 2018, but also the lack of opportunities for female performers on either side of the fence, who required a male escort to get on the radio.

Morris' 2016 debut, *Hero*, seemed like it had the potential to redefine country pop, but despite reasonable success it never quite did. She's voiced her frustration with industry gatekeepers in the lead-up to her second album, *Girl*. The advance singles, a title track that's a guitar-heavy pep talk doubling as a dogged feminist anthem, and a well-timed duet with Brandi Carlile have been brasher lyrically but more cautious musically, both less pop and less country-oriented.

What's disheartening about these songs is that Morris is counterpunching against an establishment she might be better off discounting entirely. A lyric like "I don't know what God is" would be a daring sentiment on country radio even in less commercially cautious and politically edgy times. The saddest thing is that their potential for controversy isn't even the reason Morris isn't getting airplay. Just sexist inertia. **Q**

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JIMMY 2TIMES  
FNK  
CHARITY  
DJ MEDDICO

3.3 JESSIE AND THE JINX

3.7 DR. MAMBO'S COMBO

3.8 RECKLESS ONES

3.9 MALAMANYA

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thu : february 28  
10pm : matt arthur  
& the bratlanders

fri : march 1  
7pm : laura and sean's  
movie and music trivia  
10pm : anna stine,  
hemma, rachel hanson

sat : march 2  
7pm : trivia mafia presents  
331 drinkin' spelling bee  
10pm : hey that's my 90s jam  
dance party!  
hey there handsome vs. slow moe

sun : march 3  
3-5:30pm : corpse reviver  
harry smith's anthology  
of american folk music  
8pm : trivia mafia

mon : march 4  
8pm : the roe family singers  
10pm : doug otto and friends

tue : march 5  
7-9pm : t.e.e. tuesday early evening  
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## MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS

### ELLA MAI

VARSITY THEATER, THURSDAY 2.28

London R&B singer Ella Mai hit big last spring with the irresistible shimmer of "Boo'd Up," over a year after it was first released; the sleeper hit eventually won a Grammy for Best R&B Song. Mai, who signed with DJ Mustard after the Los Angeles producer saw some of her 15-second Instagram covers, followed it with another hit in "Trip" and, in October, her self-titled debut album, a tightly crafted collection that cemented her as one of the leaders of R&B's freshman class. With Kiana Lede and Lucky Daye. 18+. 8 p.m. \$95. 1308 Fourth St. SE, Minneapolis; 612-217-7701. —MICHAEL MADDEN

### JOHN MAUS

FIRST AVENUE, THURSDAY 2.28

Originally a native of Austin, Minnesota, the brainy, experimental synth-popper John Maus moved to California after high school, eventually meeting and collaborating with fellow avant outsider Ariel Pink. His breakthrough came five years after his debut, with 2011's *We Must Become the Pitiless Censors of Ourselves* proving much better received than his divisive early work, his melodies gleaming brighter than before. Maus took a lengthy hiatus from music, earning his Ph.D., but he eventually returned to Minnesota and recorded two albums, 2017's *Screen Memories* and the companion piece *Addendum*, using a custom-built modular synthesizer. With LUKDLX. 18+. 7 p.m. \$20/\$22. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —MICHAEL MADDEN

### JAMES BLAKE

PALACE THEATRE, MONDAY 3.4

A decade ago, London's James Blake made his name as a 20-year-old electronic-music prodigy on a relatively underground level. Since then, he's become an almost omnipresent singer and producer, credited on releases by Jay-Z, Kendrick Lamar, and Frank Ocean, even winning the Best Rap Performance Grammy for his work on Jay Rock's "King's Dead." Blake's new album, *Assume Form*, has more hip-hop in its DNA than any of his previous projects, with his Andre 3000 and Travis Scott collaborations resulting in songs like nothing those MCs have done before. But it's largely defined by Blake's chilly, spacious arrangements and ever-hypnotic singing. 18+. 8 p.m. \$43.50-\$68.50. 17 W. Seventh Pl., St. Paul; 651-266-8989. —MICHAEL MADDEN

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### LIVE EVENTS

Wednesday, Feb. 27 || 7:30 pm  
**The Moth StorySLAM:**  
*Love Hurts*

Friday, Mar. 1 || 8 pm  
**Erik Koskinen**  
w. The Federales

Sunday, Mar. 3 || 7:30 pm  
**Al Church's Cinematic**  
**Orchestra Presents:**  
*Metropolis*

### CINEMA

Thursday, Feb. 28 || 7:30 pm  
**Harold and Maude** (1971) Digital

Saturday Matinee, Mar. 2 || 1 pm  
**The Princess Bride** (1987) Digital

Thursday, Mar. 7 || 7:30 pm  
**Back to the Future** (1985)  
35mm Presentation

Saturday Matinee, Mar. 9 || 1 pm  
**Babe** (1995) Digital

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## BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

1 Rabbit's foot, e.g.  
4 Left-leaning  
11 L.A. setting  
14 "Can't believe it"  
15 Solo admission?  
16 "Bad Romance"  
chanting word  
17 Scammer's brute?  
19 "\_\_\_ fool"  
20 Chops down, as trees  
21 Louisiana primary?  
22 "Don't front!"  
23 Taken in  
24 Thing that doesn't  
water your lawn?  
27 Clarifying phrase  
29 Salad dressing choice  
30 "I'd say," in texts  
33 Friend of Flounder and  
Sebastian  
36 Took a nap  
39 Event that shows faux  
flicks?  
42 Word on a triangular sign  
43 "\_\_\_ in Guyville" (Liz  
Phair album)  
44 Small business?  
45 Each of the theme  
answers in this  
puzzle, e.g.  
46 Cartoon alcoholic Andy  
48 Unbelievable strut?  
53 Fourth book in the  
Book of Mormon  
57 Away from the wind  
58 Affirmative that sounds  
like a pronoun

1 Smoke signals  
2 See eye to eye  
3 Ambergris maker  
4 Coverage providers  
5 Talks over Skype  
6 Bleat  
7 Young eel  
8 Creator of Matilda  
and Charlie  
9 Hidden motive  
10 Tennessee governor  
Bill \_\_\_\_  
11 "If This Is a Man"  
author  
12 Islands studied by  
Mead  
13 Props, another way  
18 Arm bone  
22 Covering on  
some nachos  
24 One in a pink onesie  
25 "Kiki's Delivery  
Service" genre  
26 Warning on a wing  
28 Refused  
30 Like some stares

31 False innocent reply  
32 Ticket request  
34 Das \_\_\_\_ (1990s hip-hop group)  
35 Lens name  
37 Move, as the camera  
38 "Waterfalls" singers  
40 1 in a 1,000,000 occurrence  
41 Mosh pit maneuver  
47 Sols are spent there  
48 "Let me do my thing"  
49 Anaprox alternative  
50 Sudden invasion  
51 Café sweetener  
52 Drummers sometimes ride it  
54 Japanese mercenary  
55 Award given out the day after the Razzies  
56 Glowed  
59 "Sounds fishy"  
61 Missing link's relative  
62 "When will \_\_\_\_ paid?"  
63 2015 Payne Stewart Award winner

S	O	U	P		D	E	T	O	X		Y	I	P	E
C	A	P	O		O	M	A	N	I		O	D	O	R
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>> *By Rob Brezsny*

**YARIES** (Mach 21-19 April): South Koreans work too hard. Many are on the job for 14 hours a day, six days a week. That's why a new concept in vacations has emerged there. People take sabbaticals by checking into Prison Inside Me, a facility designed like a jail. For a while, they do without cell phones and Internet and important appointments. Freed of normal stresses and stripped of obsessive concerns, they turn inward and recharge their spiritual batteries. I'd love to see you treat yourself to a getaway like this—minus the incarceration theme, of course. You'd benefit from a quiet, spacious, low-pressure escape.

**♈ TAURUS** (April 20-May 20): The astrology column you're reading is published in periodicals in four countries: the U.S., Canada, Italy and France. In all of these places, women have had a hard time acquiring political power. Neither the U.S. nor Italy has ever had a female head of government. France has had one, Edith Cresson, who served less than a year as Prime Minister. Canada has had one, Kim Campbell, who was in office for 132 days. In all these countries, the political climate has been more favorable to men than usual to boost feminine authority and enhance women's ability to shape our shared reality. And you Tauruses of all genders will be in prime position to foster that outcome. Homework: Meditate on specific ways you could contribute, even if just through your personal interactions.

**II GEMINI** (May 21-June 20): A 19-year-old guy named Anson Lemmer started a job as a pizza delivery man in Glenwood, Colorado. On his second night, he arrived with a hot pizza at a house where an emergency was in progress. A man was lying on the ground in distress. Having been trained in CPR, Lemmer leaped to his rescue and saved his life. I expect that you, too, will perform a heroic act sometime soon. Gemini—maybe not as monumental as Lemmer's, but nonetheless impressive. And I bet it will have an enduring impact, sending out reverberations that redound to your benefit for quite some time.

**CANCER** One 21-July 2022: Scientist Michael Dillon was shocked when he learned that some bees can buzz around at lofty altitudes where the oxygen is sparse. He and a colleague even found two of them at 29,525 feet—higher than Mt. Everest. How could the bees fly in such thin air? They “didn’t beat their wings faster,” according to a report in *National Geographic*, but rather “swung their wings through a wider arc.” I propose that we regard these high-flying marvels as your soul animals for the coming weeks. Metaphorically speaking, you will have the power and ingenuity and adaptability to go higher than you’ve been in a long time.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22): Do you find it a challenge to commit to an entirely plant-based diet? If so, you might appreciate flexitarianism, which is a less-perfectionist approach that focuses on eating vegetables but doesn't make you feel guilty if you eat a bit of meat now and then. In general, I recommend you experiment with a similar attitude toward pretty much everything in the coming weeks. Be strong-minded, idealistic, willful, and intent on serving your well-being—but without being a maniacal purist.

**MP VIRGO** (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): If you gorge on sugary treats and soft drinks, you ingest a lot of empty calories. They have a low nutrient density, and provide you with a scant amount of minerals, vitamins, protein, and other necessities. Since I am committed to helping you treat yourself with utmost respect, I always discourage you from that behavior. But I'm especially hopeful you will avoid it during the next three weeks, both in the literal and metaphorical senses. Please refrain from absorbing barren, vacant stuff into the sacred temple of your mind and body—including images, stories, sounds, and ideas, as well as food and drink.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Charles Grey was the second Earl of Grey, as well as Prime Minister of England from 1830 to 1834. His time in office produced pivotal changes, including the abolition of slavery, reform of child labor laws, and more democracy in the nation's electoral process. But most people today know nothing of those triumphs. Rather he is immortalized for the Earl Grey tea that he made popular. I suspect that in the coming weeks, one of your fine efforts may also get less attention than a more modest success. But don't worry about it. Instead, be content with congratulating yourself for your excellent work. I think that's the key to you ultimately getting proper appreciation for your bigger accomplishment.

**♊ SCORPIO** (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): At a young age, budding Scorpio poet Sylvia Plath came to a tough realization: "I can never read all the books I want," she wrote in her journal. "I can never be all the people I want and live all the lives I want. I can never train myself in all the skills I want. And why do I want? I want to live and feel all the shades, tones, and variations of mental and physical experience possible in life." Judging by current astrological omens, I can imagine you saying something like that right now, but your longing to immerse in life's pleasures is especially intense and a bit frustrated. But I'm pleased to predict that in the next four weeks, you'll be able to live and feel more shades, tones, and variations of experience than you have in a long time.

✦ **SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): When Europeans invaded and occupied North America, they displaced many indigenous people from their ancestral lands. There were a few notable exceptions, including five tribes in what's now Maine and Eastern Canada. They are known as the Wabanaki confederacy: the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Micmac, Maliseet, and Abenaki. Although they had to adjust to and compromise with colonialism, they were never defeated by it. I propose we make them your heroic symbols for the coming weeks. May their resilient determination to remain connected to their roots and origins motivate you to draw ever-fresh power from your own roots and origins.

**8 CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Capricorn javelin thrower Julius Jeyaraj won a silver medal at the 2016 Summer Olympics. How did he get so skilled? Not in the typical way. He gained preliminary proficiency while competing for his high school team, but after graduation, he was too poor to keep developing his mastery. So he turned to YouTube, where he studied videos by great javelin throwers to benefit from their training strategies and techniques. Now that you're in an intense learning phase of your cycle, Capricorn, I suggest that you, too, be ready to draw on sources that may be unexpected or unusual or alternative.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): The first edition of Action Comics, which launched the story of the fictional character Superman, cost 10 cents in 1938. Nowadays it's worth three million dollars. I'll make a bold prediction that you, too, will be worth considerably more on December 31, 2019 than you are right now. The increase won't be as dramatic as that of the Superman comic, but still: I expect a significant boost. And what you do in the next four weeks could have a lot to do with making my prediction come true.

**X PISCES** (Feb. 19–March 20): Until the 16th century in much of Europe and the 18th century in Britain, the new year was celebrated in March. That made sense given the fact that the weather was growing noticeably warmer and it was time to plant the crops again. In my astrological opinion, the month of March is still the best time of year for you Pisceans to observe your personal new year. The coming weeks will be an excellent time to start fresh in any area of your life. If you formulate a set of New Year's resolutions, you're more likely to remain committed to them than if you had made them on January 1.

**freewillastrology@freewillastrology.com**  
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# Outer Limits

How do I convince my brother-in-law to come out to his kids?



Dan Savage

I'm a gay guy in my late 40s with a straight sister in her early 50s. She's been married for a bit over two decades to a guy who always registered as a "possible" on my average-to-good gaydar. But I put "BIL," aka my brother-in-law, in the "improbable" bucket because he actively wooed my sister, was clearly in love with her, and fathered four boys with her, all in their late teens now. I'm sure you already saw this plot development coming: It turns out BIL has a boyfriend but is still very much closeted and denies he is gay. My sister has apparently known about this arrangement for four years, but has kept it a secret for the kids' sake. But she recently filed for divorce and told our parents and me what's been going on. Their kids have been informed about the divorce, but not about their father's boyfriend.

BIL needs to admit the truth to himself and the rest of his family and start the healing process. That's obvious. Unfortunately, there's no way I can talk him into it (we're not close), and my sister is left holding this terrible secret while her bewildered kids watch their parents' marriage crumble with no clue why. I think the kids deserve the truth, and that neither my sister nor the kids can start to heal until that happens. What can I do to help her with this? She's awfully fragile right now and I don't want to pressure her and I can't tell the kids without causing a big stink. But dammit, Dan, someone needs to start speaking some truth in that house.

DISHONEST GAY BROTHER-IN-LAW

**Secret second families**—and a secret boyfriend of four years counts—aren't secrets that keep. Your nephews are gonna find out about dad's boyfriend sooner or later, DGBIL, and sooner is definitely better. Because in the absence of the actual reason why their parents are splitting up, they're likely to come up with alternate explanations that are far worse. And when they inevitably discover the real reason, your nephews' anger at having been lied to or left in the dark will reopen the wounds.

First, seeing as BIL actively wooed and "was clearly in love with" your sister, had four children with her, and remained mar-

ried to her for two decades, I don't think BIL is a closeted gay man. My money's on closeted bisexual man. In the world we live in now, bisexuals are far less likely to be out than gays and lesbians, and the belief that a guy is either gay or straight keeps many bisexual guys closeted. Because if a bisexual guy who's married to a woman knows he's going to be seen as gay if he tells the truth—if no one will ever believe he loved his wife or wanted all those kids—he's unlikely to ever come out. So you can't fault BIL for not being out, when it's attitudes like yours that keep bi guys closeted in the first place.

Back to your nephews: They should be told the truth but you shouldn't be the one to tell them. Their parents should. Sit down with your sister and make the argument I did above. If she's keeping

## Bisexuals are far less likely to be out than gays and lesbians.

this secret solely at BIL's request, well, he can't ask that of her if doing so will damage her relationship with her kids. I don't think she should immediately out BIL, but she can and should let him know that she will have to tell the children if he doesn't. You should have a conversation with BIL. Open it by telling him that life is long, marriages are complicated, and that you know he loved your sister. But to stick the dismount here—to end his marriage without destroying his relationship with his kids—he can't hide from them. If he doesn't want to tell his boys about his boyfriend because he fears he might lose them, DGBIL, then he'll have to cut his kids out of his life—and that means losing them for sure. And then butt the fuck out.

[mail@savageandlove.net](mailto:mail@savageandlove.net)

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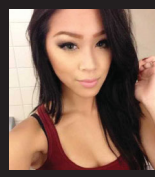
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